

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
For the Montana National Register of Historic Places Program and State Antiquities Database

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
Montana Historical Society
PO Box 201202, 1410 8th Ave
Helena, MT 59620-1202

Property Address: **1401 Lockey Avenue**

Historic Address (if applicable): **NA**

City/Town: **Helena**

Site Number: **24 LC 2191**

(An historic district number may also apply.)

County: **Lewis & Clark**

Historic Name: **Montana State Laboratory Building**

Original Owner(s): **State of Montana**

Current Ownership ☐ Private ☒ Public

Current Property Name: **Cogswell Building**

Owner(s): **State of Montana**

Owner Address: **Department of Administration**
132 Lockey Avenue

Phone:

Legal Location

PM: **Montana** Township: **10N** Range: **3W**

SE ¼ NW ¼ NW ¼ of Section: **32**

Lot(s): **1-32**

Block(s): **21**

Addition: **Corbin Addition** Year of Addition:

USGS Quad Name: **Helena** Year: **1985**

Historic Use: **Laboratory**

Current Use: **Dept. of Addictive & Mental Disorders**

Construction Date: **1955** ☐ Estimated ☒ Actual

☒ Original Location ☐ Moved Date Moved:

UTM Reference www.nris.mt.gov/topofinder2

☐ NAD 27 ☒ NAD 83 (preferred)

Zone: **12** Easting: **422187** Northing: **5159485**

National Register of Historic Places

NRHP Listing Date:

Historic District:

NRHP Eligible: ☐ Yes ☒ No

Date of this document: **February 1, 2010**

Form Prepared by: **Diana J. Painter, PhD**

Address: **3518 N. C Street, Spokane, WA 99205**

Daytime Phone: **(707) 364-0697**

MT SHPO USE ONLY

Eligible for NRHP: ☐ yes ☒ no not eligible under C

Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D not evaluated under A, B, or D

Date: 11/16/2010

Evaluator: Kate Hampton

Comments:

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

PAGE 2

Property Name: **Cogswell Building**

Site Number: **24 LC 2191**

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

X See Additional Information Page

Architectural Style: **Modern** If Other, specify:

Property Type: **Commercial** Specific Property Type: **Office**

Architect: **Victor H. Walsh** Architectural Firm/City/State: **None**

Builder/Contractor: **Unknown** Company/City/State:

Source of Information: **Newspaper article**

Location and setting. The Cogswell Building is located at 1401 Lockey Avenue within the State of Montana Capitol Campus in Helena. Its formal name is the W. F. Cogswell Building, Public Health and Human Services. A reinforced concrete building, it was constructed by the state in 1955 to house the state laboratories. It is a three-story building with a roughly M-shaped footprint and a flat roof. It is located on the west side of a block bounded by Lockey Avenue on the north; N. Saunders Street on the east; E. Broadway Avenue on the south; and S. Montana Avenue on the west. The building is located southeast of the Capitol. Its public entries face north onto Lockey Avenue and south onto E. Broadway Avenue. To the immediate west of the building is the Walt Sullivan Building. To the immediate east is N. Saunders Street. Parking is located to the west of the building, behind the Walt Sullivan Building, and extends to Broadway Avenue and S. Montana Avenue.

Materials. The Cogswell Building is constructed of reinforced concrete and has a smooth concrete finish. It features anodized aluminum windows throughout. It has a concrete foundation and a built-up roof. The new addition appears to be finished in precast concrete panels, likely on a steel frame. A few windows are glass block.

Massing and design. The Cogswell building is a three-story building with an M-shaped footprint and a flat roof. The original building is oriented toward Lockey Avenue. The central main entry is at the second story, accessed via eight broad, concrete steps with tubular metal rails. It is set back from the street. The first floor is half of one level below grade. The addition, between the two side wings of the original building, is also three stories. It is accessed at the second level as well, from the sidewalk at E. Broadway. The new wing, however, rises above the original by about one story; despite both phases of the building being three stories (it appears that the floor-to-ceiling height is greater in the new addition).

The original building consists of small bays of one window each. The windows are vertically-oriented and have a nearly square fixed light in the center surmounted by a smaller light, with an operable sash below that is the same size as the upper light. The windows have anodized aluminum frames with no surrounds. Concrete pilasters separate each window and raise the full height of the façade, terminating in a plain concrete cornice above. This arrangement is typical throughout the building.

The new wing has ribbon windows that consist of four large and two small operable lights, in a 1:2:1:1:2:1 pattern. The windows are covered with four anodized aluminum louvers along the upper side. The ribbon windows are separated into bays by vertical concrete panels that are flush with the concrete panels separating the different floors. This arrangement is typical throughout the new wing.

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

PAGE 3

Property Name: **Cogswell Building**

Site Number: **24 LC 2191**

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

North façade. The north façade of the building faces directly onto Lockey Avenue. It is flanked by the two wings that extend toward the southwest and southeast from this main building. The main entry bay consists of the entry door, which has double doors of full-height glass, topped by a transom window. It is flanked by two windows of the same design as the other windows on the building. Above the door, at the third floor, is a broad, three-light window flanked by two windows of the same design as those below. The entry is framed within a projecting concrete band at the top and both sides of this ensemble. To the left and right of the entry are nine bays. Visible above is a mechanical penthouse for the building, which is part of the new wing. The lower level of the original building is not visible except when close to the building in this location.

The east wing that extends from this central core has five bays; a two-bay entry; and then seventeen bays. The entry bay has a double entry door with full-height glass with full-height side lights, topped by a three-light transom. It is slightly recessed, and accessed via five broad concrete steps with a wide, solid concrete rail. Two sconces that flank the entry appear to be original to the building. Above, at the third floor, are two vertically-oriented windows typical of the windows throughout the building. The west wing has three window bays; a two-bay entry; and then sixteen bays. The entry is accessed via eight concrete steps, but is otherwise similar to the east entry. The first floor is visible on the west wing.

West façade. The west façade of the west wing of the Cogswell Building fronts on a driveway to the parking, service and loading area. This driveway is an extension of N. Roberts Street, which terminates before it meets Broadway in this location. The west façade consists of a three-story, six-bay extension of the west wing, and a two-story addition which does not display the same concrete detailing as the main facades. A mechanical penthouse is located on this two-story addition. The rear face of this wing displays similar detailing as the front of the wing, with the exception of a full-height circulation tower to the right, which is lighted with a tall glass block window.

East façade. Visible to the east of the Cogswell Building is the one-and-two story end wall of the east wing. The two-story portion has five window bays and an entry with a flush metal door at the second level, accessed via a metal stair. Below on the right are three window bays; visible on the one-story portion are three window bays with the same concrete detailing as on the remainder of this portion of the building. The rear face of this wing displays similar detailing as the front of this wing, with the exception of a full-height circulation tower on the left side, which is lighted with a tall glass block window. The one-story addition on the back of this wing has seven window bays and a secondary entry with a flush metal door at the ground level.

South façade. The south façade of this building consists of the new 1981 wing to the building. It is three-stories with a rectangular footprint. A tall mechanical penthouse, visible above the main entry on the north façade, terminates this new wing where it abuts the original building and rises above what was the boiler room for the original building. The entry to the new wing is located at the sidewalk of E. Broadway Street.

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

PAGE 4

Property Name: **Cogswell Building**

Site Number: **24 LC 2191**

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

It is enclosed within a shallow portico that is covered with precast concrete panels at the top, supported by heavy, square, concrete columns at the corners. This portico is enclosed on three sides with doors and windows of full-height glass, within anodized frames. Above the one-story portico, on the main face of the building, is a ribbon window with louvers that matches the other windows on the wing. The entry portico is accessed via three concrete steps and a concrete ramp with a simple tubular metal rail. There are no other openings on this endwall.

The east side façade of this wing consists of seven bays of ribbon windows, previously described. All three stories are visible, as there is a depressed driveway and service area about one floor below Broadway in this location. The west side of this facade consists of six bays of windows and one solid bay. Again, the first floor is visible here, as it is at the level of a service and parking area accessed from the extension of N. Roberts Street.

Changes over time. The new wing of the Cogswell Building was constructed in 1981, according to state records. The building was remodeled again in 2007. The Cogswell Building was originally V-shaped. The new addition 'filled in' the void in the "V", creating an "M" shape. The new addition is taller than the original building and has its main entrance E. Broadway Street, which changes the orientation of the structure.

According to historic research on the building, the building prototype was W-shaped. It may be that the new wing was part of a master plan for the building. Early articles on the building also stated that all laboratories would have natural light from the north. However, a site had not been selected for the building before it was designed. The building designer, Victor H. Walsh, stated that it was the intention that the building be oriented to the west. The Cogswell Building as it was constructed in 1955 was oriented to the north; this however does achieve the goal of indirect north light in the lab spaces. It is likely that the anodized aluminum windows on the original building were added at the time of the 1981 remodel, as this finish was widely used at the time.

Additional one-story additions have been added at the southwest and southeast corners of the building, slightly altering its appearance in these locations.

Landscaping and site features. There is little landscaping on the site. Street trees occupy the planting strip along Lockey Avenue. Aspens flank the main entries on both the north and south sides of the building. There is a steep embankment between the rear parking and service areas of the building and E. Broadway Street. This is landscaped with grass and junipers. Street trees are planted along the edge of the sidewalk at Broadway. There are mature evergreens located in the northeast corner of the site. The east edge of the site is enclosed with a cyclone fence.

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

PAGE 5

Property Name: **Cogswell Building**

Site Number: **24 LC 2191**

HISTORY OF PROPERTY

☒ See Additional Information Page

Plans for the new state laboratory got underway in 1945, as dictated by the state postwar planning and construction commission. It was part of a \$4,500,000 program of postwar building authorized by the state legislature. The regulatory framework was established in the 1945 legislative session, when an interdepartmental commission appointed to oversee construction of the building. It was envisioned as a centralized facility in which all necessary testing for the state would take place. The board overseeing the project, which would also ultimately manage the facility, was made up of the state engineer; Dr. W. F. Cogswell, for whom the building would be named, as the executive secretary of the state board of health; the state veterinarian; the state purchasing agent; and the state commissioner of agriculture.

Victor H. Walsh, a water conservation board engineer, was selected to develop plans for the facility, under the direction of the head of the state highway department testing laboratory. Walsh drew up two plans, one W-shaped and one E-shaped. Each plan had three floors and a main building plus three wings. The estimated price for the building was \$550,000 (it would eventually cost approximately \$900,000). They were apparently prototypical plans, as each was designed to face west, but no site had yet been selected. A 1946 article stated that the design feature would be the same as the state highway building (note that the R. H Gagle, head of the state highway commission, apparently took the lead on design issues).

INFORMATION SOURCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY

☐ See Additional Information Page

"Governor Signs Bill Naming Lab Building," *The Independent Record*, March 7, 1955, p. 1.

"Laboratory Commission Meets Next Week To Talk Building Plans," *The Independent-Record*, February 8, 1946, p. 1.

"New State Lab Building Being Planned," *The Independent Journal*, September 4, 1945, p. 8.

"Newest Building Is Laboratory To Test Anything," *The Independent Record*, July 4, 1954.

"Victor Walsh Will Draw Plan of Lab," *The Independent Journal*, November 2, 1945, p. 5.

R.L. Polk & Co., *R. L. Polk & Co.'s Helena city directory*, 1956, 1969, 1970.

Willard, John, "Beautiful Seat of Government For State Has Expanded Tremendously in Past 52 Years," *The Independent Record*, July 4, 1954.

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

PAGE 6

Property Name: **Cogswell Building**

Site Number: **24 LC 2191**

HISTORY OF PROPERTY

The interior functions of the building were outlined as follows in a February 8, 1946 article in *The Independent-Record*.

The building would be modern throughout, with recessed lighting fixtures and movable partitions which would make 30 percent of the total 50,000 feet of floor space flexible. All laboratory rooms will face north to give an even light at all times of day.

Built-in laboratory facilities include distilled water, [illegible] gas, compressed air, vacuum hydrogen, oxygen, steam at several pressures and hot and cold water. These would be available through T-pipe takeoffs beneath each window and in special islands in the laboratories. At present each laboratory must provide these facilities separately.

Ground floor

In each plan the design is to use the ground floor and the first floor of the north wing for the highway testing laboratory, now in the basement of the state capital. The ground floor of the south wing and the first and second floors of the same wing would be devoted to the state board of health.

The center wing ground floor would be used by the state water conservation board and would include a cafeteria. The first and second floors of the center section would house the state livestock sanitary board and the second floor would be allotted to future expansion.

After much discussion the building was named the "Montana State Laboratory Building." The legislature could not decide whether, in naming the building, to honor William F. Cogswell, the retired Secretary of the State Board of Health, or Dr. Emil Stars, a pioneer Montana scientist, so they did not name it after either ("*Governor Signs Bill Naming Lab Building*").

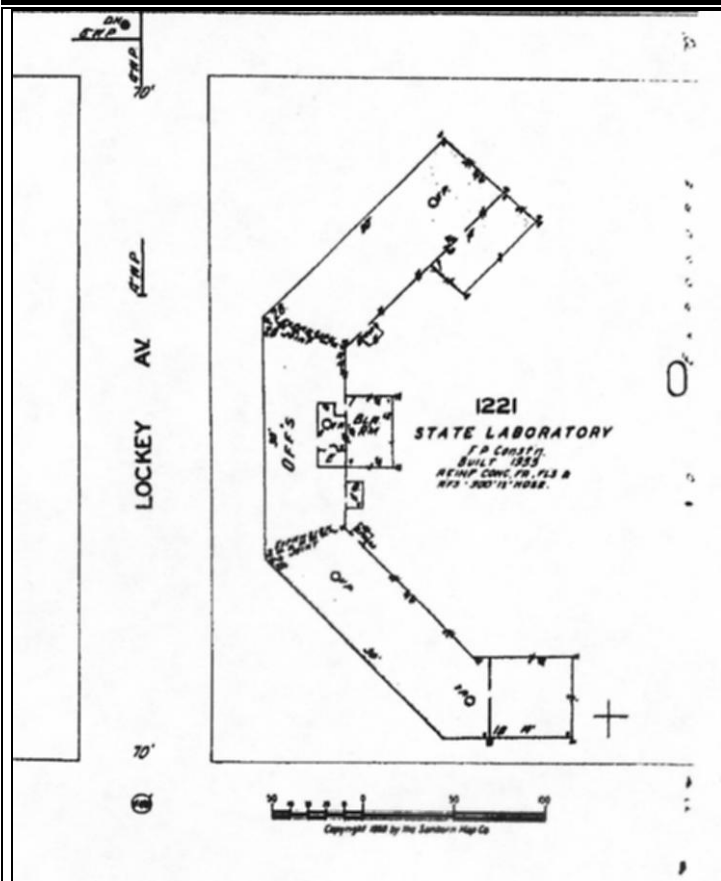
When opened the building housed the Highway Commission Testing Division and the State Board of Health Bacteriological Division, Health Education Division, Public Health Nursing, and Disease Control Divisions (*R. L. Polk & Co.'s Helena city directory, 1956*).

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

PAGE 7

Property Name: **Cogswell Building**

Site Number: **24 LC 2191**



Sanborn map, 1958, shows original building footprint



ALL MONTANA HIGHWAY administration activity centers in this modern building at the corner of Sixth and Roberts. Built in the mid-30's it is the only one of the capitol area group built without appropriations or use of allocated building funds. The money for the structure, which is completely functional and designed for maximum lighting and efficiency, came from highway funds.

The Cogswell Building was modeled after the Highway Commission Building, shown here in 1954

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

PAGE 8

Property Name: **Cogswell Building**

Site Number: **24 LC 2191**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

NRHP Listing Date:

Evaluated Under Criterion C only – more research required for A, B, of D eligibility

NRHP Eligibility: ☐ Yes ☒ No ☒ Individually ☐ Contributing to Historic District ☐ Noncontributing to Historic District

NRHP Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Area of Significance: Period of Significance:

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

☐ See Additional Information Page

The Cogswell Building is a utilitarian structure that was meant to consolidate and house the state's laboratory functions, primarily for the highway and State Board of Health departments. It was originally a V-shaped building meant to distribute natural, north light to all the laboratories. It featured double-loaded corridors and well-equipped facilities to carry out these functions. This arrangement implied that the building might be 'extruded' indefinitely to accommodate additional laboratories. However, when a major addition was made in 1981, this office wing filled the void between the two laboratory wings, rising above the original building and altering this aesthetic.

The new wing is compatible with the existing wings in terms of materials, yet provides a contrast in expression, as is appropriate under the Secretary of Interior's Standards. It may be that the new wing fulfills a master plan for the building, as it was announced in 1946 that the building would be M-shaped. A site had not been chosen for the building when the building prototype was developed, and it may be that the sloping site at 1401 Lockey did not allow for the fulfillment of the master plan as envisioned. It is concluded here that the visual presence of this new office wing alters the pure expression of the original building as a utilitarian building with a scientific function. It is the conclusion of this author that the building is not individually eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. The property was not evaluated under Criteria A, B, or D nor as a possible contributor within a potential historic district.

INTEGRITY

☐ See Additional Information Page

The building retains integrity of location, setting, and materials. It does not retain integrity of design, with the addition of a new wing. It does not retain integrity of workmanship, as the new wing is clad in precast concrete panels, in contrast to the reinforced concrete of the original. It does not retain the feeling of the original, as a result of the new wing. It does not retain its association as a laboratory building with the addition of an office wing.

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
PHOTOGRAPHS

Property Name: **Cogswell Building**

Site Number: **24 LC 2191**



Description: **Front entry, north facade**



Description: **Front entry, south facade**

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
PHOTOGRAPHS

Property Name: **Cogswell Building**

Site Number: **24 LC 2191**



Description: **East wing, northeast facade**



Description: **West wing, northwest facade**

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
PHOTOGRAPHS

Property Name: **Cogswell Building**

Site Number: **24 LC 2191**



Description: **East façade of new addition, with east wing in foreground**



Description: **West façade of new addition, with west wing in foreground**

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
PHOTOGRAPHS

Property Name: **Cogswell Building**

Site Number: **24 LC 2191**



Description: **Rear façade of east wing, detail**



Description: **Rear façade of west wing**

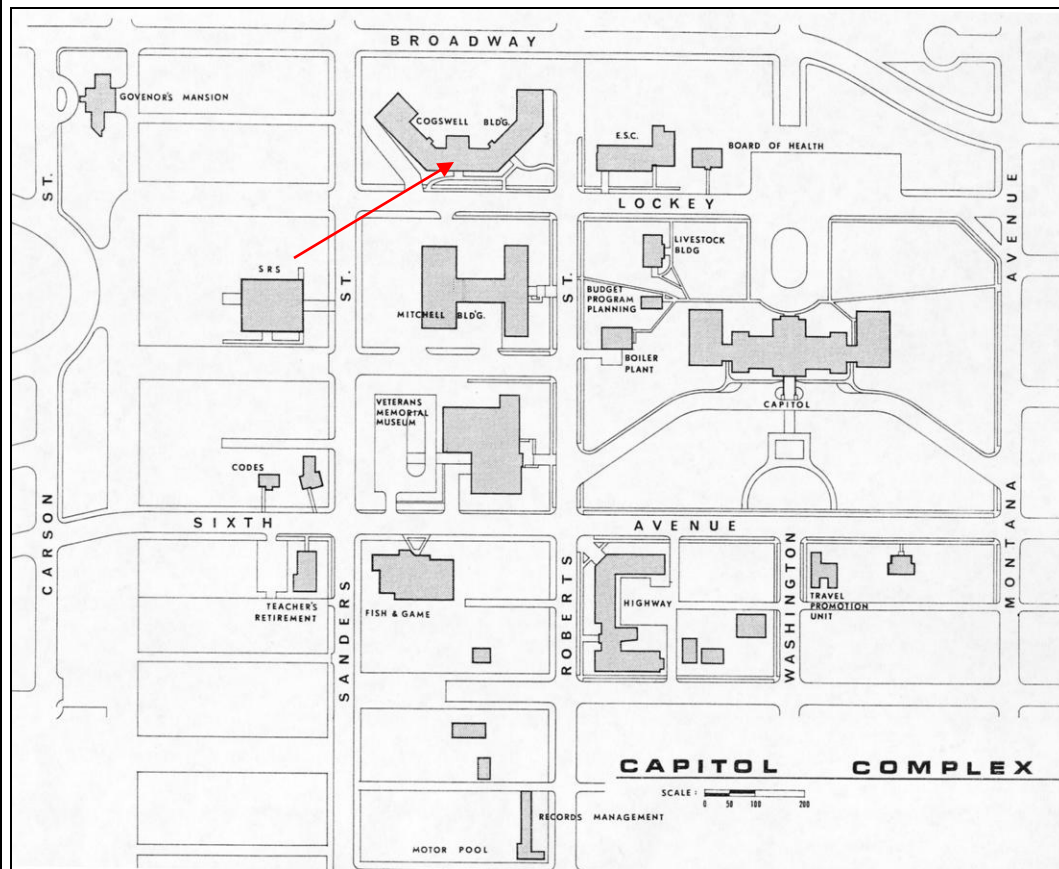
MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
SITE MAP

Property Name: **Cogswell Building**

Site Number: **24 LC 2191**



Cogswell Building in 2009

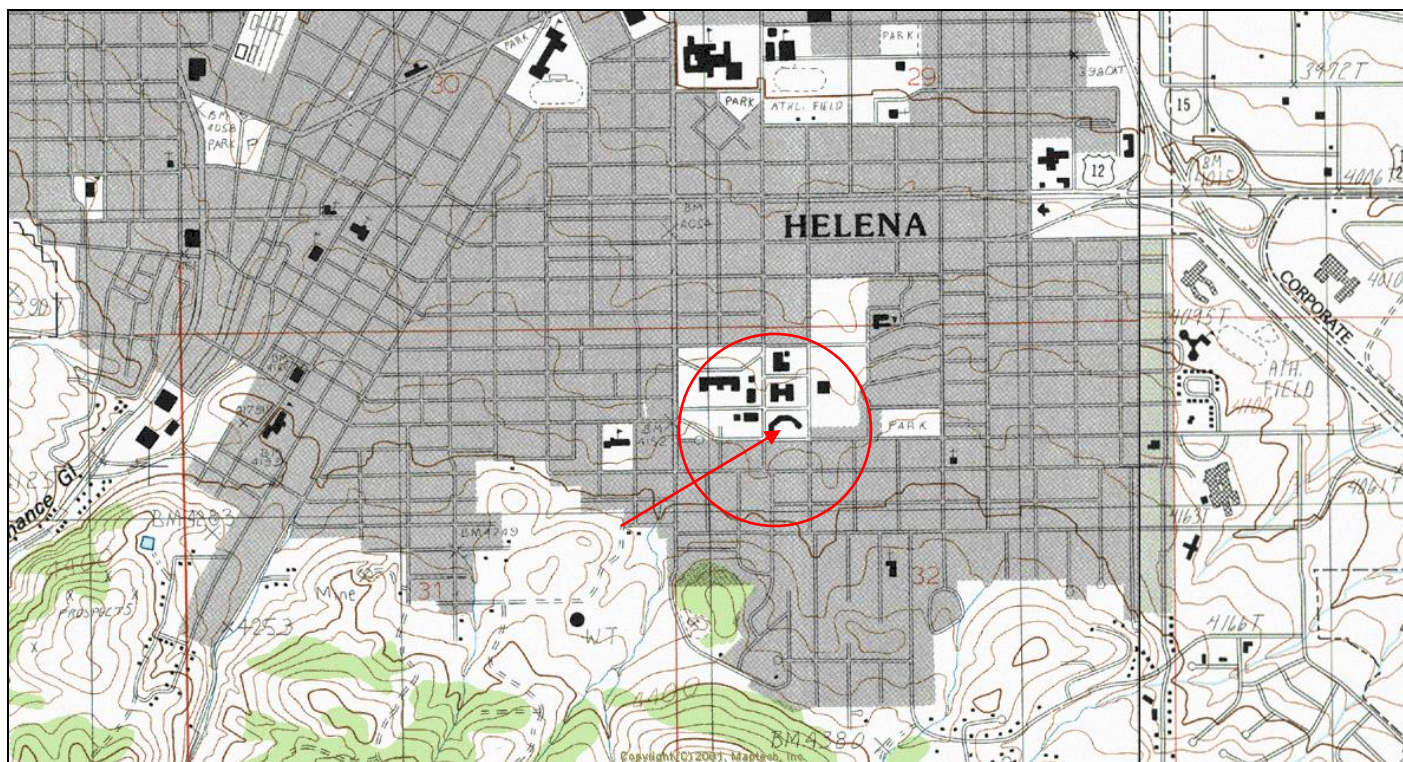


Cogswell Building ca 1980

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

Property Name: **Cogswell Building**

Site Number: **24 LC 2191**



USGS Topographic Quadrangle, 1:24,000 scale. Do not reduce or enlarge map; keep the map scale accurate because legal locations are checked with a plastic template. Label the property location, including the SITS number, in a method that will photocopy well. A highlighter marker is not acceptable.